



Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010

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Queensland

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010

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Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010

An Act to facilitate the disclosure, in the public interest, of information about wrongdoing in the public sector and to provide protection for those who make disclosures

Chapter 1 Preliminary

Part 1 Introduction

1 Short title

This Act may be cited as the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*.

2 Commencement

This Act commences on a day to be fixed by proclamation.

Part 2 Main objects

3 Main objects of Act

The main objects of this Act are—

- (a) to promote the public interest by facilitating public interest disclosures of wrongdoing in the public sector; and
- (b) to ensure that public interest disclosures are properly assessed and, when appropriate, properly investigated and dealt with; and

- (c) to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the interests of persons who are the subject of a public interest disclosure; and
- (d) to afford protection from reprisals to persons making public interest disclosures.

Part 3 Interpretation

4 Definitions

The dictionary in schedule 4 defines particular words used in this Act.

5 Meaning of *proper authority*

A *proper authority* is—

- (a) a public sector entity; or
- (b) a member of the Legislative Assembly.

6 Meaning of *public sector entity*

(1) A *public sector entity* is any of the following—

- (a) a committee of the Legislative Assembly, whether or not a statutory committee;
- (b) the parliamentary service;
- (c) a court or tribunal;
- (d) the administrative office attached to a court or tribunal;
- (e) the Executive Council;
- (f) a department;

Note—

The following are, or are included in, departments—

- the Queensland Ambulance Service
- the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

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- the Queensland Police Service.
- (g) a local government;
- (h) a registered higher education provider or TAFE Queensland;
- (j) an entity established under an Act or under State or local government authorisation for a public, State or local government purpose;
- (k) an entity, prescribed under a regulation, that is assisted by public funds.
- (2) However, the following are not public sector entities—
- (a) a corporate entity, other than to the extent expressly stated in this Act;
- (b) a GOC, other than to the extent expressly stated in this Act;
- (c) the following entities under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*—
- (i) an advisory committee;
 - (ii) a non-State school;
 - (iii) a parents and citizens association;
- (d) an entity prescribed under a regulation.
- (3) Also, a State educational institution or school council is part of the department in which the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is administered.

Note—

See also the *Corrective Services Act 2006*, section 273(5).

- (4) In this section—

registered higher education provider see the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* (Cwlth), section 5.

TAFE Queensland means TAFE Queensland established under the *TAFE Queensland Act 2013*, section 5(1).

7 Meaning of *public officer*

- (1) A *public officer*, of a public sector entity, is an employee, member or officer of the entity.
- (2) Also—
 - (a) the Minister responsible for the administration of a department is a public officer of the department; and
 - (b) a member of a school council is a public officer of the department in which the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* is administered; and
 - (c) a Ministerial staff member employed in the office of a Minister is a public officer of each department administered by the Minister; and
 - (d) a Ministerial staff member employed in the office of an Assistant Minister is a public officer of each department for which the Assistant Minister is given responsibility under her or his functions.

Note—

Under the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*, section 25, an Assistant Minister has the functions decided by the Premier.

- (3) In this section—

Assistant Minister means a member of the Legislative Assembly appointed as an Assistant Minister under the *Constitution of Queensland 2001*, section 24.

ministerial staff member means a person employed under the *Ministerial and Other Office Holder Staff Act 2010* as a staff member in the office of a Minister.

8 Meaning of *chief executive officer*

- (1) The *chief executive officer* of a public sector entity includes, if the entity is listed in schedule 1, a person mentioned in the schedule as chief executive officer of the entity.
- (2) A regulation may prescribe a person who is to be treated as a chief executive officer of a particular public sector entity for all or particular public interest disclosures.

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- (3) A regulation under subsection (2) may not prescribe a chief executive officer for a public sector entity mentioned in schedule 1, other than a part of a department.

Part 4 Operation of Act

9 Act binds all persons

This Act binds all persons, including the State.

10 Other protection saved

- (1) This Act does not limit the protection given by another law to a person who makes a disclosure of any type or affect another remedy available to the person.
- (2) If there is an inconsistency between this Act and another law mentioned in subsection (1), the other law prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

Chapter 2 Public interest disclosures

Part 1 Interpretation

11 Meaning of *public interest disclosure*

A *public interest disclosure* is a disclosure under this chapter and includes all information and help given by the discloser to a proper authority for the disclosure.

Note—

This chapter sets out requirements about the information that may be disclosed and who may disclose it, to whom, and how.

Part 2 **General public interest disclosures**

Division 1 **Information that may be disclosed and who may disclose it**

12 **Disclosure by any person**

- (1) This section applies if a person (whether or not the person is a public officer) has information about—
 - (a) a substantial and specific danger to the health or safety of a person with a disability; or
 - (b) the commission of an offence against a provision mentioned in schedule 2, if the commission of the offence is or would be a substantial and specific danger to the environment; or
 - (c) a contravention of a condition imposed under a provision mentioned in schedule 2, if the contravention is or would be a substantial and specific danger to the environment; or
 - (d) the conduct of another person that could, if proved, be a reprisal.
- (2) The person may make a disclosure under section 17 in relation to the information to a proper authority.
- (3) For subsection (1), a person has information about the conduct of another person or another matter if—
 - (a) the person honestly believes on reasonable grounds that the information tends to show the conduct or other matter; or
 - (b) the information tends to show the conduct or other matter, regardless of whether the person honestly believes the information tends to show the conduct or other matter.

13 Disclosure by a public officer

- (1) This section applies if a person who is a public officer has information about—
 - (a) the conduct of another person that could, if proved, be—
 - (i) corrupt conduct; or
 - (ii) maladministration that adversely affects a person's interests in a substantial and specific way; or
 - (b) a substantial misuse of public resources (other than an alleged misuse based on mere disagreement over policy that may properly be adopted about amounts, purposes or priorities of expenditure); or
 - (c) a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety; or
 - (d) a substantial and specific danger to the environment.
- (2) The person may make a disclosure under section 17 in relation to the information to a proper authority.
- (3) For subsection (1), a person has information about the conduct of another person or another matter if—
 - (a) the person honestly believes on reasonable grounds that the information tends to show the conduct or other matter; or
 - (b) the information tends to show the conduct or other matter, regardless of whether the person honestly believes the information tends to show the conduct or other matter.

Division 2 To whom disclosure may be made

14 When member of the Legislative Assembly is a proper authority

- (1) A member of the Legislative Assembly is a proper authority to whom a person may make any disclosure under section 12 or 13.

- (2) However, subsection (1) does not apply to a disclosure if the information that is the subject of the disclosure relates to a judicial officer.

15 Public sector entity is a proper authority if particular connection

- (1) A public sector entity is a proper authority to which a person may make a disclosure under section 12 or 13 if—
- (a) the information that is the subject of the disclosure relates to—
 - (i) the conduct of the entity or any of its public officers; or
 - (ii) anything the entity has a power to investigate or remedy; or
 - (iii) the conduct of another person that could, if proved, be a reprisal that relates to a previous disclosure made by the person to a proper authority; or
 - (b) the person honestly believes that the information that is the subject of the disclosure relates to a matter mentioned in paragraph (a).
- (2) However, subsection (1) does not apply to a disclosure if the information that is the subject of the disclosure relates to a judicial officer.

16 Chief judicial officer etc. is only proper authority

- (1) This section applies to a disclosure relating to a judicial officer, other than a disclosure made under section 23.
- (2) A disclosure relating to a judicial officer that could, if the conduct were proved, be corrupt conduct or a reprisal relating to a previous disclosure under this Act, may be made only—
- (a) to the chief judicial officer of the relevant court or tribunal; or
 - (b) to the Crime and Corruption Commission.

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- (3) Another disclosure relating to a judicial officer may be made only to the chief judicial officer of the relevant court or tribunal.
 - (4) A chief judicial officer of a court or tribunal may receive a public interest disclosure only if the disclosure is about the conduct of another judicial officer of the court or tribunal.
 - (5) The chief judicial officer may refer a public interest disclosure made to the chief judicial officer about the conduct of another judicial officer to a proper authority that is a public sector entity.
 - (6) Section 31(2) to (5) applies to a referral under subsection (5) as if the chief judicial officer were a public sector entity.
 - (7) In this section—

disclosure relating to a judicial officer means a disclosure where the information that is the subject of the disclosure relates to the conduct of the judicial officer.

relevant court or tribunal, for a judicial officer, is the court or tribunal of which the judicial officer is a member or to which the judicial officer is attached.

Division 3 How disclosure may be made

17 How disclosure to be made

- (1) A person may make a disclosure to a proper authority in any way, including anonymously.
- (2) However, if a proper authority has a reasonable procedure for making a public interest disclosure to the proper authority, the person must use the procedure.
- (3) Despite subsection (2), if the proper authority is a public sector entity, the person may make the disclosure to—
 - (a) its chief executive officer; or
 - (b) for a public sector entity that is a department—the Minister responsible for its administration; or

- (b) the conduct of another person that could, if proved, be a reprisal that relates to a previous disclosure made by the employee to the GOC, rail government entity or the Crime and Corruption Commission.
- (2) The employee may make a disclosure in relation to the information to the GOC, rail government entity or the Crime and Corruption Commission.
- (3) For subsection (1), an employee has information about the conduct of a person if—
 - (a) the employee honestly believes on reasonable grounds that the information tends to show the conduct; or
 - (b) the information tends to show the conduct, regardless of whether the employee honestly believes the information tends to show the conduct.
- (4) The employee may make a disclosure under this section in any way, including anonymously.
- (5) However, for a disclosure to a GOC or rail government entity, if the GOC or rail government entity has a reasonable procedure for making a public interest disclosure to the GOC or rail government entity, the employee must use the procedure.
- (6) This Act does not affect a procedure required under another Act for disclosing the type of information being disclosed.
- (7) If a public interest disclosure is properly made to a GOC or rail government entity, the GOC or rail government entity is taken to have received the disclosure for the purposes of this Act.
- (8) This section does not affect—
 - (a) the making of a public interest disclosure by any person under section 12; or
 - (b) the making of a complaint to the Crime and Corruption Commission under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*.
- (9) This section does not affect a referral under section 31—

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- (2) The person may make a disclosure of substantially the same information that was the subject of the public interest disclosure mentioned in subsection (1)(a) to a journalist.
 - (3) To remove any doubt, it is declared that—
 - (a) the disclosure of information to a journalist under this section is a public interest disclosure; and
 - (b) a journalist to whom information is disclosed under this section is not a relevant person for the purposes of section 64; and
 - (c) a journalist to whom information is disclosed under this section does not, for the purposes of section 65, gain the information because of the journalist's involvement in this Act's administration.
 - (4) In this section—

journalist means a person engaged in the occupation of writing or editing material intended for publication in the print or electronic news media.

Part 5 Miscellaneous provisions

21 Conduct of unknown person

A person may make a public interest disclosure whether or not the person is able to identify a particular person to whom the information disclosed relates.

22 Involuntary disclosure

A person may make a public interest disclosure even though the person makes it under a legal requirement.

23 Disclosure in court or tribunal proceeding

- (1) The section applies if a person—

- (a) has information that the person may disclose as a public interest disclosure to a proper authority; and
 - (b) discloses the information to a court or tribunal in a proceeding in which the information is relevant and admissible.
- (2) The disclosure is taken to be a public interest disclosure made to the court or tribunal as a proper authority under section 15(1)(a)(ii).
- (3) The court or tribunal may refer the disclosure to another proper authority.
- (4) Section 31(2) to (5) applies to a referral under subsection (3) as if the court or tribunal were a public sector entity.
- (5) The fact that a court or tribunal is treated as a public sector entity under this Act, and therefore can be a proper authority under section 15(1)(a)(ii) to receive a public interest disclosure, does not give a person a right to take a proceeding before the court or tribunal that the person does not have apart from this Act.

24 Past, present or future event

A person may make a public interest disclosure about—

- (a) events that happened or may have happened, whether before or after the commencement of this Act; or
- (b) events that are or may be happening; or
- (c) events that will or may happen.

25 Number of disclosures not limited

The fact that a person may make a public interest disclosure under a particular provision of this Act does not prevent the person from making the disclosure under another provision of this Act to the same or another proper authority.

Chapter 3 Obligations of entities to whom disclosures may be made

Part 1 Preliminary

26 Definition for ch 3

In this chapter—

public sector entity includes a GOC.

27 Purpose of chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to state the obligations of—

- (a) a public sector entity to which a public interest disclosure may be made; and
- (b) a member of the Legislative Assembly to whom a public interest disclosure may be made.

Part 2 Public sector entities

28 Reasonable procedures to deal with public interest disclosures

- (1) The chief executive officer of a public sector entity must establish reasonable procedures to ensure that—
 - (a) public officers of the entity who make public interest disclosures are given appropriate support; and
 - (b) public interest disclosures made to the entity are properly assessed and, when appropriate, properly investigated and dealt with; and

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- (c) appropriate action is taken in relation to any wrongdoing that is the subject of a public interest disclosure made to the entity; and
 - (d) a management program for public interest disclosures made to the entity, consistent with any standard made under section 60, is developed and implemented; and
 - (e) public officers of the entity are offered protection from reprisals by the entity or other public officers of the entity.
- (2) The chief executive officer of a public sector entity must ensure the procedures are published, as soon as practicable after the procedures are made, on a website that is maintained by the public sector entity and readily accessible to the public.

29 Record of disclosure

- (1) The chief executive officer of a public sector entity to which a public interest disclosure is made must keep a proper record of the disclosure, including—
- (a) the name of the person making the disclosure, if known; and
 - (b) the information disclosed; and
 - (c) any action taken on the disclosure; and
 - (d) any other information required under a standard made under section 60.
- (2) The chief executive officer of a public sector entity to which a public interest disclosure is referred under section 31 or 34 must keep a proper record of the disclosure, including—
- (a) the name of the person making the disclosure, if known; and
 - (b) the information disclosed; and
 - (c) the name of the public sector entity, or member of the Legislative Assembly, that referred the disclosure; and
 - (d) any action taken on the disclosure; and

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- (e) any other information required under a standard made under section 60.
- (3) In this section—
- public interest disclosure* includes a purported public interest disclosure.
- public sector entity* does not include—
- (a) a court or tribunal; or
- (b) the Executive Council.

30 When no action required

- (1) A public sector entity may decide not to investigate or deal with a public interest disclosure if—
- (a) the substance of the disclosure has already been investigated or dealt with by another appropriate process; or
- (b) the entity reasonably considers that the disclosure should be dealt with by another appropriate process; or
- (c) the age of the information the subject of the disclosure makes it impracticable to investigate; or
- (d) the entity reasonably considers that the disclosure is too trivial to warrant investigation and that dealing with the disclosure would substantially and unreasonably divert the resources of the entity from their use by the entity in the performance of its functions; or
- (e) another entity that has jurisdiction to investigate the disclosure has notified the entity that investigation of the disclosure is not warranted.
- (2) If an entity decides not to investigate or deal with a public interest disclosure under subsection (1), the entity must give written reasons for its decision to the person making the disclosure.
- (3) A person who receives written reasons for a decision of an entity under subsection (2) may apply to the chief executive of

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the entity for a review of the decision within 28 days after receiving the written reasons.

31 Referral of disclosure

- (1) A public sector entity to which a public interest disclosure is made under section 15, or referred under section 34, may refer the disclosure to another public sector entity (the *referral entity*) if the disclosure is about—
 - (a) the conduct of the referral entity or a public officer of the referral entity; or
 - (b) the conduct of an entity (including itself), or another matter, that the referral entity has the power to investigate or remedy.
- (2) The power of a public sector entity to investigate or remedy conduct that is the subject of a public interest disclosure is not limited by a referral of the disclosure under subsection (1).
- (3) The public sector entity must not refer a public interest disclosure to another public sector entity if it considers there is an unacceptable risk that a reprisal would happen because of the referral.
- (4) In considering whether there would be an unacceptable risk, the public sector entity must, if practicable, consult with the person who made the public interest disclosure.
- (5) This section does not affect another law under which a public sector entity must refer a report, complaint, information or evidence to another entity.

32 Person who made disclosure, or referring entity, to be informed

- (1) A public sector entity to which a public interest disclosure is made under section 15, or referred under section 31 or 34, must give the person who made the disclosure, or the entity that referred the disclosure, reasonable information about the disclosure.

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- (2) For subsection (1), reasonable information about the disclosure includes at least the following—
 - (a) confirmation that the disclosure was received by the public sector entity;
 - (b) a description of the action proposed to be taken, or taken, by the public sector entity in relation to the disclosure;
 - (c) if action has been taken by the public sector entity in relation to the disclosure—a description of the results of the action.
 - (3) The information must be given to the person or the entity in writing.
 - (4) The public sector entity need not give information under subsection (1) if giving the information would be likely to adversely affect—
 - (a) anybody’s safety; or
 - (b) the investigation of an offence or possible offence; or
 - (c) necessary confidentiality about an informant’s existence or identity.
 - (5) If a person makes a public interest disclosure to the Crime and Corruption Commission in a complaint of corruption, this section does not impose on the commission any duty that the commission does not already have under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*.
 - (6) In this section—
corruption see the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*, schedule 2.

33 Disclosure information to be given to oversight agency

- (1) The oversight agency may make, under section 60, a standard that requires the chief executive officer of a public sector entity to give to the oversight agency all or any of the information mentioned in section 29.

Chapter 4 Protection

Part 1 General

36 Immunity from liability

A person who makes a public interest disclosure is not subject to any civil or criminal liability or any liability arising by way of administrative process, including disciplinary action, for making the disclosure.

37 Confidentiality provisions do not apply

Without limiting section 36, a person who makes a public interest disclosure does not by doing so—

- (a) commit an offence under any Act that imposes a duty to maintain confidentiality in relation to a matter or any other restriction on the disclosure of information; or
- (b) breach an obligation by way of oath or rule of law or practice or under an agreement requiring the person to maintain confidentiality or otherwise restricting the disclosure of information in relation to a matter.

38 Protection from defamation action

Without limiting section 36, in a proceeding for defamation, a person who makes a public interest disclosure has a defence of absolute privilege for publishing the information disclosed.

39 Liability for own conduct

- (1) A person's liability for the person's own conduct is not affected by the person's disclosure of that conduct under this Act.
- (2) In this section—

liability includes civil or criminal liability or any liability arising by way of administrative process, including disciplinary action.

40 Reprisal and grounds for reprisal

- (1) A person must not cause, or attempt or conspire to cause, detriment to another person because, or in the belief that—
 - (a) the other person or someone else has made, or intends to make, a public interest disclosure; or
 - (b) the other person or someone else is, has been, or intends to be, involved in a proceeding under the Act against any person.
- (2) An attempt to cause detriment includes an attempt to induce a person to cause detriment.
- (3) A contravention of subsection (1) is a reprisal or the taking of a reprisal.
- (4) A ground mentioned in subsection (1) as the ground for a reprisal is the unlawful ground for the reprisal.
- (5) For the contravention mentioned in subsection (3) to happen, it is sufficient if the unlawful ground is a substantial ground for the act or omission that is the reprisal, even if there is another ground for the act or omission.

41 Offence of taking reprisal

- (1) A person must not take a reprisal.
Maximum penalty—167 penalty units or 2 years imprisonment.
- (2) An offence against subsection (1) is an indictable offence.

42 Damages entitlement for reprisal

- (1) A reprisal is a tort and a person who takes a reprisal is liable in damages to any person who suffers detriment as a result.

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- (2) Any appropriate remedy that may be granted by a court for a tort, including exemplary damages, may be granted by a court for the taking of a reprisal.
 - (3) If the claim for damages goes to trial in the Supreme Court or the District Court, it must be decided by a judge sitting without a jury.
 - (4) The right of a person to bring proceedings for damages under this section does not affect any other right or remedy available to the person arising from the reprisal.
 - (5) Proceedings for damages may be brought under this section even if a prosecution in relation to the reprisal has not been brought, or can not be brought, under section 41.
 - (6) The *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003* does not apply to proceedings for damages brought under this section.

43 Vicarious liability of public sector entity

- (1) If any of a public sector entity's employees contravenes section 40 in the course of employment, both the public sector entity and the employee, as the case may be, are jointly and severally civilly liable for the contravention, and a proceeding under section 42 may be taken against either or both.
- (2) It is a defence to a proceeding against a public sector entity under section 42 if the public sector entity proves, on the balance of probabilities, that the public sector entity took reasonable steps to prevent the employee contravening section 40.
- (3) In this section—
public sector entity includes a GOC.

44 Complaint under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991

- (1) A person may make a complaint under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* about a reprisal.

- (2) The complaint may be dealt with under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*, chapters 6 and 7 as if the complaint were about an alleged contravention of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*.
- (3) However—
 - (a) if a person commences proceedings in a court under section 42 in relation to a reprisal, the person can not subsequently make a complaint under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* about the reprisal; and
 - (b) if the person makes a complaint under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* about a reprisal and the complaint is accepted under that Act, the person can not subsequently commence proceedings under section 42 in relation to the reprisal.
- (4) A complaint under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* about a reprisal may be made even if a prosecution in relation to the reprisal has not been brought, or can not be brought, under section 41.

45 Reasonable management action not prevented

- (1) Nothing in this part is intended to prevent a manager from taking reasonable management action in relation to an employee who has made a public interest disclosure.
- (2) However, a manager may take reasonable management action in relation to an employee who has made a public interest disclosure only if the manager's reasons for taking the action do not include the fact that the person has made the public interest disclosure.
- (3) In this section—

manager, of an employee, means a person to whom the employee reports or a person who directly or indirectly supervises the employee in the performance of the employee's functions as an employee.

to have the action set aside because it was the taking of a reprisal against the public officer.

- (3) Subsection (2) applies even if the decision on the hearing of the appeal or review is in the form of a recommendation.
- (4) In this section—
public officer includes an employee of a GOC.

47 Relocation of public service employee

- (1) This section gives a public service employee a right to apply for relocation.
- (2) The application must be made on the ground that—
 - (a) it is likely a reprisal will be taken against the public service employee if the employee continues in the employee's existing work location; and
 - (b) the only practical way to remove or substantially remove the danger of a reprisal is to relocate the employee.
- (3) The application may be made by the public service employee to the industrial relations commission under the *Industrial Relations Act 2016*.
- (4) For the purposes of subsection (3)—
 - (a) the application is taken to be an appeal against a decision under the *Public Sector Act 2022* not to relocate the employee; and
 - (b) the decision mentioned in paragraph (a) is taken to have been made by the chief executive of the employee's department on the day the employee makes the application under subsection (1).
- (5) If the industrial relations commission considers the ground is established, the commission may direct that the employee be relocated within the employee's department or to another department.
- (6) The industrial relations commission can not direct that the employee be relocated without the agreement of—

- (a) the public service employee; and
 - (b) if the relocation is to another department—the other department’s chief executive.
- (7) For subsection (5), the industrial relations commission has power to do, or authorise the doing of, anything necessary or convenient to relocate the public service employee.

Part 3 Injunctions

48 Right to apply to industrial commission

- (1) An application for an injunction about a reprisal may be made to the industrial commission if the reprisal—
- (a) has caused or may cause detriment to an employee; and
 - (b) involves or may involve a breach of the *Industrial Relations Act 2016* or an industrial instrument under that Act.
- (2) The application may be made by—
- (a) the employee; or
 - (b) an industrial organisation—
 - (i) whose rules entitle it to represent the industrial interests of the employee; and
 - (ii) acting in the employee’s interests with the employee’s consent; or
 - (c) the Crime and Corruption Commission acting in the employee’s interests with the employee’s consent if—
 - (i) the employee is a public officer; and
 - (ii) the reprisal involves or may involve an act or omission that the Crime and Corruption Commission may investigate.

- (3) The *Industrial Relations Act 2016*, section 473 applies to the application, but this part prevails if it is inconsistent with that section.
- (4) If the industrial commission has jurisdiction to grant an injunction on an application under subsection (1), the jurisdiction is exclusive of the jurisdiction of any other court or tribunal other than the Industrial Court.
- (5) Without limiting this section, the application is an industrial cause within the meaning of the *Industrial Relations Act 2016*.

49 Right to apply to Supreme Court

- (1) This section applies only to a person who can not apply under section 48 to the industrial commission for an injunction about a reprisal.
- (2) An application for an injunction about a reprisal may be made to the Supreme Court by—
 - (a) a person claiming that the person is suffering or may suffer detriment from a reprisal; or
 - (b) the Crime and Corruption Commission acting in the person's interests with the person's consent if—
 - (i) the person is a public officer; and
 - (ii) the reprisal involves or may involve an act or omission that the Crime and Corruption Commission may investigate.

50 No right to apply for injunction if complaint made under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991

Despite sections 48 and 49, a person may not apply for an injunction about a reprisal under either of those provisions if the person makes a complaint under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* about the reprisal.

Note—

See the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*, section 144 (Applications for orders protecting complainant's interests (before reference to tribunal)).

51 Grounds for injunction

The industrial commission or Supreme Court may grant an injunction under this part, in terms it considers appropriate, if it is satisfied that a person has engaged, is engaging or is proposing to engage, in conduct amounting to—

- (a) a reprisal; or
- (b) attempting a reprisal; or
- (c) aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring a reprisal; or
- (d) inducing or attempting to induce, whether by threats, promises or otherwise, a reprisal; or
- (e) being in any way, directly or indirectly, knowingly concerned in, or party to, a reprisal.

52 Order may require stated action

If the industrial commission or Supreme Court is satisfied that a person has engaged or is engaging in conduct mentioned in section 51, it may grant an injunction, under this part, requiring the person to take stated action to remedy any detriment caused by the conduct.

53 Evidence

- (1) The industrial commission or Supreme Court may grant an injunction, under this part, restraining a person from engaging in conduct mentioned in section 51—
 - (a) whether or not it considers that the person intends to engage again, or to continue to engage, in the conduct; or
 - (b) whether or not the person has previously engaged in the conduct; or

- (c) whether or not there is an imminent danger of substantial damage to anyone if the person engages in the conduct.
- (2) The industrial commission or Supreme Court may grant an injunction, under this part, requiring a person to do something—
 - (a) whether or not it considers that the person intends to fail again, or to continue to fail, to do the thing; or
 - (b) whether or not the person has previously failed to do the thing; or
 - (c) whether or not there is an imminent danger of substantial damage to anybody if the person fails to do the thing.

54 Interim injunction

An interim injunction may be granted pending the final decision on an application for an injunction under this part.

55 Restrictions about application

- (1) For an application for an injunction under this part that is before it, the industrial commission or Supreme Court may direct that—
 - (a) a report of the whole or part of the proceeding for the application must not be published; or
 - (b) evidence given, or anything filed, tendered or exhibited in the application must be withheld from release or search, or released or searched only on a stated condition.
- (2) The direction may be given if the industrial commission or Supreme Court considers that—
 - (a) disclosure of the report, evidence or thing would not be in the public interest; or

- (b) persons other than parties to the application do not have a sufficient legitimate interest in being informed of the report, evidence or thing.
- (3) An application for an injunction under this part may be heard without notice to another person if the industrial commission or Supreme Court considers a hearing without notice to another person is necessary in the circumstances.
- (4) This section does not limit the power of the industrial commission or Supreme Court.

56 Undertaking as to damages and costs

If the Crime and Corruption Commission applies for an injunction under this part, no undertaking about damages or costs is to be required.

Chapter 5 Oversight agency

57 Definition for ch 5

In this chapter—

public sector entity—

- (a) includes a GOC; and
- (b) does not include a court or tribunal.

58 Who is the oversight agency

The Office of the Ombudsman is the *oversight agency*.

59 Main functions

The oversight agency's main functions are to—

- (a) monitor the management of public interest disclosures, including, for example, by—
 - (i) monitoring compliance with this Act; and
 - (ii) collecting statistics about public interest disclosures; and
 - (iii) monitoring trends in relation to public interest disclosures; and
- (b) review the way in which public sector entities deal with public interest disclosures generally, or particular public interest disclosures; and
- (c) perform an educational and advisory role, including, for example, by—
 - (i) promoting the objects of this Act; and
 - (ii) providing advice about public interest disclosures; and
 - (iii) providing, or coordinating the provision of, education and training programs about public interest disclosures.

60 Standards

- (1) The oversight agency may make standards about the way in which public sector entities are to deal with public interest disclosures.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), a standard may provide for procedures relating to—
 - (a) the way in which public sector entities are to facilitate the making of public interest disclosures; and
 - (b) the way in which public sector entities are to perform their functions under this Act; and
 - (c) the protection of persons from reprisals taken by public sector entities or public officers; and

- (d) the provision by public sector entities to the oversight agency of statistical information about public interest disclosures.
- (3) Before making a standard, the oversight agency must take reasonable steps to consult with the public sector entities to which the standard may apply.
- (4) For subsection (3), the consultation must take place with—
 - (a) for a GOC—the GOC’s shareholding Ministers; or
 - (b) otherwise—the public sector entity’s chief executive.
- (5) A failure to consult under subsection (3) does not affect the validity of the standard.
- (6) A standard is binding on a public sector entity.
- (7) However, if the public sector entity is a GOC, the standard is binding on the GOC only if the GOC’s shareholding Ministers—
 - (a) notified the GOC’s board, under the *Government Owned Corporations Act 1993*, section 114(1), that the standard was to apply to the GOC; and
 - (b) before giving the notification mentioned in paragraph (a), complied with the *Government Owned Corporations Act 1993*, section 114(3).
- (8) If a standard is not binding on a GOC because of the application of subsection (7), the shareholding Ministers of the GOC must notify the oversight agency, in writing, that the standard is not binding on the GOC.
- (9) A standard may be amended or replaced by a later standard made under this section.
- (10) A standard may be made only by gazette notice.
- (11) As soon as practicable after the oversight agency makes a standard, the oversight agency must ensure the standard is published on the oversight agency’s website.

- (12) If a standard is inconsistent with an Act or subordinate legislation, the Act or subordinate legislation prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

61 Annual report

- (1) The oversight agency must, as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year, prepare a report on the operation of this Act during that year and give a copy of the report to the Minister.
- (2) A report under subsection (1) may include, in relation to the financial year to which it relates, information about the following—
- (a) the performance of the oversight agency's functions under this Act;
 - (b) the performance by public sector entities of the requirements of this Act, including any requirements of standards made under section 60;
 - (c) other matters prescribed under a regulation.
- (3) A report under subsection (1) must include statistical information about public interest disclosures.
- (4) The oversight agency may comply with this section by including the information necessary for a report under subsection (1) in the report mentioned in the *Ombudsman Act 2001*, section 87.

62 Review of Act

- (1) The oversight agency must carry out a review of the operation of this Act.
- (2) The review must commence within 5 years after the commencement of this section.
- (3) The objects of the review include—
- (a) deciding whether the main objects of the Act remain valid; and

- (b) deciding whether the Act is achieving its main objects; and
 - (c) deciding whether the provisions of the Act are appropriate for achieving its main objects.
- (4) The oversight agency must give the Minister and the Speaker a report about the outcome of the review.
- (5) The Minister must, as soon as practicable after receiving the report, table the report in the Legislative Assembly.

63 Application of chapter to Crime and Corruption Commission

- (1) Nothing in this chapter—
- (a) gives the oversight agency the power to review or monitor the way in which the Crime and Corruption Commission exercises its functions under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*; or
 - (b) requires the Crime and Corruption Commission to report to the oversight agency about the way the commission exercises its powers under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply in relation to the functions of the Crime and Corruption Commission as a public sector entity in relation to a public interest disclosure made to the commission by a public officer of the commission, or a public interest disclosure referred to the commission under section 31(1)(a).

Chapter 6 Miscellaneous

64 Protection from liability

- (1) A relevant person is not civilly liable to someone for an act done, or omission made, honestly and without negligence under this Act.
- (2) If subsection (1) prevents a civil liability attaching to a person—
 - (a) for a person who is a public officer of a local government or an entity established under local government authorisation—the liability attaches instead to the local government; or
 - (b) for a person who is a public officer of an entity, other than an entity mentioned in paragraph (a), that does not represent the State—the liability attaches instead to the entity; or
 - (c) otherwise—the liability attaches instead to the State.
- (3) In this section—

relevant person means a person who is responsible for discharging a function, or part of a function, under this Act.

65 Preservation of confidentiality

- (1) If a person gains confidential information because of the person's involvement in this Act's administration, the person must not make a record of the information, or intentionally or recklessly disclose the information to anyone, other than under subsection (3).

Maximum penalty—84 penalty units.

- (2) A person gains information because of the person's involvement in this Act's administration if the person gains the information because of being involved, or an opportunity given by being involved, in the administration.

Example—

If a person gains information because the person is a public officer who receives a public interest disclosure for a proper authority, the person gains the information because of the person's involvement in this Act's administration.

- (3) A person may make a record of confidential information or disclose it to someone else—
 - (a) for this Act; or
 - (b) to discharge a function under another Act including, for example, to investigate something disclosed by a public interest disclosure; or
 - (c) for a proceeding in a court or tribunal; or
 - (d) if the person to whom the confidential information relates consents in writing to the making of the record or disclosure of the information; or
 - (e) if—
 - (i) the person can not reasonably obtain the consent of the person to whom the confidential information relates; and
 - (ii) making the record or disclosing the information is unlikely to harm the interests of the person to whom the confidential information relates and is reasonable in all the circumstances; or
 - (f) if the person reasonably believes that making the record or disclosing the information is necessary to provide for the safety or welfare of a person; or
 - (g) if authorised under a regulation or another Act.
- (4) This section does not affect an obligation a person may have under the principles of natural justice to disclose information to a person whose rights would otherwise be detrimentally affected.
- (5) Subsection (4) applies to information disclosing, or likely to disclose, the identity of a person who makes a public interest disclosure only if it is—

- (a) essential to do so under the principles of natural justice; and
 - (b) unlikely a reprisal will be taken against the person because of the disclosure.
- (6) To remove any doubt, it is declared that if there is an inconsistency between this section and section 10(1), this section prevails.
- (7) In this section—
- confidential information***—
- (a) includes—
 - (i) information about the identity, occupation, residential or work address or whereabouts of a person—
 - (A) who makes a public interest disclosure; or
 - (B) against whom a public interest disclosure has been made; and
 - (ii) information disclosed by a public interest disclosure; and
 - (iii) information about an individual’s personal affairs; and
 - (iv) information that, if disclosed, may cause detriment to a person; and
 - (b) does not include information publicly disclosed in a public interest disclosure made to a court, tribunal or other entity that may receive evidence under oath, unless further disclosure of the information is prohibited by law.

law, for a public interest disclosure made to a committee of the Legislative Assembly, includes a standing rule, order or motion of the Legislative Assembly.

66 False or misleading information

- (1) A person must not—

- (a) make a statement to a proper authority intending that it be acted on as a public interest disclosure; and
- (b) in the statement, or in the course of inquiries into the statement, intentionally give information that is false or misleading in a material particular.

Maximum penalty—167 penalty units or 2 years imprisonment.

- (2) An offence against subsection (1) is an indictable offence.
- (3) In this section—
proper authority includes a GOC.

67 Misconduct by breach of Act

- (1) A public officer is guilty of misconduct under an Act under which the officer may be dismissed from office or disciplined for misconduct, if the officer contravenes any of the following—
 - section 41 (Offence of taking reprisal)
 - section 65 (Preservation of confidentiality)
 - section 66 (False or misleading information).
- (2) To remove any doubt, it is declared that under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*, the Crime and Corruption Commission may investigate the contravention, or the alleged or suspected contravention, if—
 - (a) the public officer is a member of the police service; or
 - (b) the contravention is corrupt conduct by a person holding an appointment in a unit of public administration within the meaning of the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*.

68 Proceedings for offences generally

An offence against this Act other than an offence declared to be an indictable offence is a summary offence.

69 Proceedings for indictable offences

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), a proceeding on a charge for an indictable offence under this Act must be heard and decided summarily.
- (2) A Magistrates Court must abstain from dealing summarily with a charge for an indictable offence under this Act—
 - (a) if satisfied, at any stage, and after hearing any submissions by the prosecution and defence, that because of the nature or seriousness of the offence or any other relevant consideration the defendant, if convicted, may not be adequately punished on summary conviction; or
 - (b) if satisfied, on an application made by the defence, that because of exceptional circumstances the charge should not be heard and decided summarily.
- (3) If the court abstains from jurisdiction, the proceeding for the charge must be conducted as a committal proceeding.

70 Change to a committal proceeding during summary proceeding

- (1) This section applies if, during a proceeding before a Magistrates Court to hear and decide a charge for an indictable offence summarily, the court decides the charge is not one that should be decided summarily.
- (2) The court must stop treating the proceeding as a proceeding to hear and decide the charge summarily and start treating it as a committal proceeding.
- (3) The defendant's plea at the start of the hearing must be disregarded.
- (4) The evidence already heard by the court must be taken to be evidence in the committal proceeding.
- (5) To remove any doubt, it is declared that the *Justices Act 1886*, section 104 must be complied with for the committal proceeding.

71 Regulation-making power

- (1) The Governor in Council may make regulations under this Act.
- (2) A regulation may provide that, for all or particular public interest disclosures—
 - (a) a public sector entity is to be treated as a part of another public sector entity; or
 - (b) a part of a public sector entity is to be treated as part of another public sector entity or a separate public sector entity; or
 - (c) public sector entities or parts of public sector entities are to be treated as a single public sector entity.
- (3) A regulation under subsection (2) may not—
 - (a) apply to a public sector entity mentioned in section 6(1)(a) or (b); or
 - (b) provide for a court or tribunal to be treated as part of a public sector entity not consisting of courts or tribunals of like jurisdiction or their administrative offices; or
 - (c) be inconsistent with a requirement under an Act that a public sector entity act independently.
- (4) In this section—

public sector entity includes a GOC.

Chapter 7 Repeal

72 Repeal

The Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994, No. 68 is repealed.

Chapter 8 Transitional provisions for Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010

73 Definitions for ch 8

In this chapter—

commencement means the commencement of this section.

new Act means the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*.

repealed Act means the *Whistleblowers Protection Act 1994*.

74 Disclosures made under repealed Act

A public interest disclosure made under the repealed Act before the commencement of this section is taken, from the commencement, to be a public interest disclosure under the new Act.

75 Vicarious liability of employers

Proceedings under section 42 of the new Act may be taken against an employer of a person who causes detriment to another person in reprisal for a public interest disclosure only if the reprisal happens after the commencement.

76 Complaint under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991

A complaint may be made under section 44(1) in relation to a reprisal only if the reprisal happens after the commencement.

77 Confidentiality of information

- (1) This section applies if a person gained confidential information because of the person's involvement as a public officer in the administration of the repealed Act.

- (2) The person is taken to have gained the information because of the person's involvement as a public officer in the new Act's administration.
- (3) The person may make a record of the confidential information, or disclose it to someone else, under section 65(3) of the new Act, even if the person gained the information before the commencement.
- (4) In this section—
public officer includes a former member of the former misconduct tribunal established under the repealed *Misconduct Tribunals Act 1997*, section 11.

Chapter 9 **Transitional provision for Public Service and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2012**

78 Continuation of standards made by oversight agency

- (1) This section applies to standards made by the Public Service Commission under section 60 that are in force immediately before the commencement of this section.
- (2) The standards are taken, on the commencement, to be the standards made by the ombudsman as the oversight agency.

Schedule 1 Chief executive officers

section 8

Public sector entities	Chief executive officers
Legislative Assembly committee	Speaker or chairperson of the committee
parliamentary service	Speaker or Clerk of the Parliament
court or tribunal presided over by Supreme Court judge	Chief Justice
court or tribunal presided over by a District Court judge	Chief Judge
court or tribunal presided over by a magistrate or justice of the peace	Chief Magistrate
administrative office attached to a court or tribunal	proper officer of the court or tribunal or chief executive of the relevant department
Executive Council	officer appointed as clerk of Executive Council
department	department's chief executive
local government	mayor or chief executive officer
Crime and Corruption Commission	chairperson of the commission
Office of the Ombudsman	ombudsman

Schedule 2 Offences or contraventions endangering the environment

section 12(1)(b) and (c)

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003

- section 24(1) (Unlawful harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage)
- section 25(1) (Prohibited excavation, relocation and taking away)
- section 26(1) (Unlawful possession of Aboriginal cultural heritage)

Biosecurity Act 2014

- section 36 (Reporting presence of prohibited matter)
- section 37 (Dealing with prohibited matter)
- section 42 (Reporting presence of category 1 or 2 restricted matter)
- section 44 (Requirement to kill and dispose of category 7 restricted matter)
- section 45 (Offences about other categories of restricted matter)

Environmental Protection Act 1994

- all provisions for which a contravention is an offence

Fisheries Act 1994

- section 90 (Non-indigenous fisheries resources not to be released)
- section 91 (Aquaculture fisheries resources not to be released)
- section 92 (Duty of person who unlawfully takes or possesses non-indigenous plants)
- section 122 (Protection of fisheries resources in declared fish habitat area)

- section 123 (Protection of marine plants)

Forestry Act 1959

- section 53(1)(b) (Interference with forest products on Crown holdings and particular entitlements)
- section 54 (Interfering with forest products on Crown lands etc.)

Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009

- all provisions for which a contravention is an offence

Land Act 1994

- section 404 (No trespassing)

Mineral Resources Act 1989

- section 194 (Conditions of mineral development licence)
- section 209 (Contravention by holder of mineral development licence)
- section 276 (General conditions of mining lease)
- section 308 (Contravention by holder of mining lease)

Nature Conservation Act 1992

- section 88 (Restrictions on taking protected animal and keeping or use of unlawfully taken protected animal)
- section 89(1) (Restriction on taking etc. particular protected plants)
- section 91 (Restriction on release etc. of international and prohibited wildlife)
- section 92 (Prohibition on breeding etc. hybrids of protected animals)
- section 93 (Aborigines' and Torres Strait Islanders' rights to take etc. protected wildlife)
- section 94 (Conservation officers prohibited in dealing with protected wildlife)
- section 97(2) (Restriction on taking etc. of native wildlife in areas of major interest and critical habitats)

- section 109 (Compliance with order)

Petroleum Act 1923

- all provisions for which a contravention is an offence

Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004

- all provisions for which a contravention is an offence

Queensland Heritage Act 1992

- section 104 (Offence to destroy protected area)
- section 155 (Contravention of stop order)
- section 164B(4) (Restoration orders)

Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003

- section 24(1) (Unlawful harm to Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage)
- section 25(1) (Prohibited excavation, relocation and taking away)
- section 26(1) (Unlawful possession of Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage)

Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995

- all provisions for which a contravention is an offence

Water Act 2000

- section 272(4) (Immediate suspension of permit in exceptional circumstances)
- section 273(3) (Notice to owner of land to remove vegetation etc.)
- section 814 (Destroying vegetation, excavating or placing fill without permit)

Schedule 4 Dictionary

section 4

administrative action—

- (a) means any action about a matter of administration, including, for example—
- (i) a decision and an act; and
 - (ii) a failure to make a decision or do an act, including a failure to provide a written statement of reasons for a decision; and
 - (iii) the formulation of a proposal or intention; and
 - (iv) the making of a recommendation, including a recommendation made to a Minister; and
 - (v) an action taken because of a recommendation made to a Minister; and
- (b) does not include an operational action of a police officer or of an officer of the Crime and Corruption Commission.

annual report of a department means the annual report of the department required to be prepared and tabled in the Legislative Assembly under the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

chief executive officer, of a public sector entity, see section 8.

chief judicial officer means a judicial officer who is treated under this Act as a chief executive officer of a court or tribunal.

commission of inquiry means a commission of inquiry under the *Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950* and includes an inquiry under a commission mentioned in section 4(2) of that Act.

corrupt conduct see the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*, section 15.

detriment includes—

- (a) personal injury or prejudice to safety; and
- (b) property damage or loss; and
- (c) intimidation or harassment; and
- (d) adverse discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment about career, profession, employment, trade or business; and
- (e) financial loss; and
- (f) damage to reputation, including, for example, personal, professional or business reputation.

disability see the *Disability Services Act 2006*.

employee, of an entity, includes a person engaged by the entity under a contract of service.

environment see the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

GOC—

- (a) means a GOC and a prescribed GOC subsidiary under the *Government Owned Corporations Act 1993*; and
- (b) does not include a GOC or a prescribed GOC subsidiary that is a declared entity under the *Infrastructure Investment (Asset Restructuring and Disposal) Act 2009* in relation to those parts of the entity's businesses, assets and liabilities that are being disposed of in a declared project under that Act.

investigate includes take evidence.

judicial officer includes a registrar or deputy registrar of a court or tribunal performing delegated judicial tasks.

maladministration is administrative action that—

- (a) was taken contrary to law; or
- (b) was unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory; or
- (c) was in accordance with a rule of law or a provision of an Act or a practice that is or may be unreasonable, unjust,

oppressive, or improperly discriminatory in the particular circumstances; or

- (d) was taken—
 - (i) for an improper purpose; or
 - (ii) on irrelevant grounds; or
 - (iii) having regard to irrelevant considerations; or
- (e) was an action for which reasons should have been given, but were not given; or
- (f) was based wholly or partly on a mistake of law or fact; or
- (g) was wrong.

oversight agency see section 58.

proper authority see section 5.

proper officer of a court or tribunal means—

- (a) for the Supreme Court, the District Court or the Childrens Court constituted by a judge—the registrar of the court; or
- (b) for a Magistrates Court or the Childrens Court constituted other than by a judge—the clerk of the court; or
- (c) for another court or tribunal—the administrative officer in charge of the administrative office attached to the court or tribunal.

public funds are funds available to, or under the control of, a public sector entity including, for example, public moneys within the meaning of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

public health or safety includes the health or safety of persons—

- (a) under lawful care or control; or

Examples for paragraph (a)—

- 1 students under the care or control of a teacher
- 2 patients under the care or control of a doctor, nurse or other health professional

-
- 3 prisoners under the care or control of a corrective services officer
- (b) using community facilities or services provided by the public or private sector; or
 - (c) in employment workplaces.

public interest disclosure see section 11.

public officer see section 7.

public sector entity see section 6.

rail government entity see the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994*, schedule 6.

relevant department, for an administrative office attached to a court or tribunal, means the department in which is administered the Act under which the court or tribunal is established.

reprisal see section 40.

school council means a school council established for a State school under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, section 79.

shareholding Ministers, of a GOC, see the *Government Owned Corporations Act 1993*, section 78.

State educational institution see the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*.

tribunal means—

- (a) QCAT or another tribunal that is constituted by a person acting judicially; or
- (b) a body or person performing a function under an Act to hear appeals by employees about dismissal from employment, disciplinary action or other unfair treatment; or
- (c) a commission of inquiry.